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ABSTRACT

A study examined two first-grade classrooms implementing the whole language approach and two utilizing the basal reading approach to determine the differences, if any, between the treatments. The hypothesis was that the whole language reading approach when combined with a phonics program would not result in higher test scores on a standardized test than the basal reading approach combined with a phonics program. All four classes completed the required curriculum for the first grade. The 48 students in the whole language classes were instructed through the use of Big Books with whole class lessons and much writing incorporated into the program. The 47 students in the basal reading classes were instructed through the MacMillan basal series in reading groups.All four classroom teachers also included the same phonics program, separate from the reading program. The California Test for Basic Skills (CTBS) was administered to all four classes. The scores from the subtests of comprehension, word analysis, spelling and vocabulary were examined using t-tests. Results indicated rejection of the hypothesis of the study. Findings revealed that the basal series approach proved significantly better than the whole language approach. (Contains 5 tables of data, related research, 22 references, and 4 pages of test scores.) (Author/CR)

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ED 405 551

The Whole Language Approach versus The Basal Reading Approach and the Effects on Reading Achievement Scores

By:

Michelle Puorro

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ABSTRACT

This study examined two first grade classrooms implementing the Whole Language approach and two first grade classrooms utilizing the Basal Reading approach to determine differences, if any, between the treatments.

All four classes completed the required curriculum for first grade. The Whole language classes were instructed through the used of Big Books with whole class lessons and incorporated much writing into the program. The Basal Reading classes were instructed through the McMillian basal series in reading groups. All four classroom teachers also included the same phonics program, separate from the reading program.

The California Test for Basic Skills (CTBS) was administered to all four classes. The scores from the subtests of comprehension, word analysis, spelling and vocabulary were examined using *t* tests. The hypothesis of this study was rejected, the basal series approach proved significantly better.

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And lastly, I would like to thank Mrs. Linda Walters for pulling all of the knowledge gained together and for adding meaning to the true definition of what it means to be a teacher.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my dad, Allen Puorro. Throughout my years completing my Master's degree, he gave strong support and never ending encouragement.

Without my dad by my side this experience would not have been completed. For this reason, I dedicate this paper and all of my love to my dad.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page number

I. Abstract..... ii

II. Acknowledgements..... iii

III. Dedication..... iv

IV. List of Tables..... vi
Means of Comparison Groups on the California Test of Basic Skills

V. The Whole Language Approach versus the Basal Reading Approach and the Effects on Reading Achievement

Introduction..... 1
Hypothesis..... 4
Procedures and Samples..... 5
Results: Analysis of Data..... 11
Conclusion..... 14
Discussion and Implications..... 15

VI. Study Techniques: Related Literature..... 18

VII. References..... 34

VIII. Appendices

Appendix A: Scores for the Vocabulary Subtest
Appendix B: Scores for the Comprehension Subtest
Appendix C: Scores for the Word Analysis Subtest
Appendix D: Scores for the Spelling Subtest

LIST OF TABLES

Page Number

I. Mean, Standard Deviation and *t* of the Samples for the Vocabulary Subtest..... 11

II. Mean, Standard Deviation and *t* of the Samples for the Comprehension Subtest..... 12

III. Mean, Standard Deviation and *t* of the Samples for the Word Analysis Subtest..... 13

IV. Mean, Standard Deviation and *t* of the Samples for the Spelling Subtest..... 13

V. Class Average Means on the California Test of Basic Skills..... 14

Children who don't read well are in grave danger of doing poorly in school and are at-risk of dropping out. Because success in reading is so important, principals and teachers face unrelenting pressure to produce high test scores. The high stakes involved in seeing that the children become readers has produced an on going controversy over the merits of whole language and phonics.

Products like "Hooked on Phonics" was cited by the federal trade Commission for false advertising and insufficient research. Researcher Richard Turner investigated 70 years of research on phonics in a basal reading program, and reported that the basal program falls into a category of weak instruction. Turner states, "Perhaps it is time for reading experts to turn away from the debate over systematic phonics used in isolation in search of a more powerful instructional treatments for beginning reading" (Turner, 1989).

People have been searching for the single best way to teach children how to read. For years, phonics has been the traditional way of teaching reading by associating letters with sounds. However, the question often arises about it's effectiveness because it lacks meaningful literature. The basal stories are written to teach the phonetic skills presented in the lessons. Usually, reading is presented as a

separate subject and the basal stories are forgotten about and not incorporated into any other subject for the rest of the day.

Children's knowledge about print and the skills they have mastered in recognizing and using it can be evaluated best through running records of their behaviors in frequent individual observation, collection of work samples, and personal interviews. Frequent checking and rechecking are required because young children are constantly learning. standardized tests also measure some of the print concepts. the tests evaluate children on skills such as auditory memory, rhyme, letter sound recognition, visual matching, reading for context, school language and listening.

Unfortunately, because school districts are often evaluated on how well children perform on the standardized tests, teachers may feel pressured to teach to the test, and pressured to find a reading program that will produce high achievement in reading.

The early instruction of reading in our schools is a particularly ripe place for the processing to flourish. These social processes could explain why groups of children

experience failure in learning to read and fall further behind during the course of schooling.

Education express concern over declining reading attainment scores (Chall, 1983). Educators have become increasingly concerned with large numbers of children with experience severe problems in learning to read. The gap between those who are learning and those who are having problems widens over the course of schooling, the number of children who are experiencing problems in learning to read has been estimated be governmental committees to be 10 to 15 percent (Chall, and Carroll, 1975). Many have argued that a child's failure to learn to read might be evidence that the instruction was lacking (Calfee, 1982).

Learning to read is not just an activity among teacher student, and text, but a group activity. children learn not only from the interactions they have with their teachers but also from how the teacher relates to peers. The multiple levels at which we gather children together for instructional purposes are all potential of our expectations, within reading groups, between reading groups and within the class (Brazee 1986). The expectations at each level need to be examined, exploring how the mixture of student's abilities interacts with ways of teaching reading that results in success.

Success in schooling rests upon learning to read and upon the continued development of reading for the purpose of gaining and analyzing new and increasingly complex information (Calkins, 1982). Progress towards this goal has met with somewhat mixed results.

The effects of the Whole Language Reading Approach, when combined with a phonics program has not been studied to determine whether it is superior or inferior to or equivalent to the achievement produced using a Basal Reader combined with a phonics program.

For as much controversy there is among educators between whole language and basal readers, it is universally agreed upon that there is a great need to find the most effective way for children to learn how to read and to enjoy it. While results suggest that whole language programs are inferior to basal plus phonics programs.

Hypothesis

To add evidence on this topic, the following study was undertaken. It was hypothesized that the whole language reading approach when combined with a phonics program would not result in higher test scores on a standardized test than the basal reading approach combined with a phonics program.

Procedures and Samples

The population selected for this study included all of the students who entered first grade in a selected school for the 19985-1996 school year. Intact classrooms of first grade children from four classrooms located within the same school were selected. The comparison group consisted of 95 first grade students - 48 children in two whole language classrooms and 47 children in two basal reader classrooms.

The basal reader classrooms and whole language classrooms had equal pupil - teacher ratio. The teachers in the study were experienced instructors with at least 3 years of experience. All of the teachers in the study had pursued or were in the process of pursuing graduate studies in the educational field at accredited colleges.

Each teacher was interviewed as to their teaching style, strategies and methods used within their classrooms, reading materials used and a basic overview of the schedule for the reading curriculum for the school year.

The school district was approached at ask permission to conduct the study. Permission was obtained from the school district. Two classrooms used whole language strategies and routines for teaching beginning reading (New View reading program) and the other two classrooms used the traditional basal approach for

teaching beginning reading (Houghton Mifflin basal series). All four classrooms used a supplemental phonics program (Alpha One phonics program).

The basal teachers used the district - outlined reading curriculums along with the adopted basal reading programs. The typical schedule in these classes began with reading skill lessons selected from a published scope and sequence chart of reading skills. Each skill lesson was explained by the teachers and was followed with the assignment and completion of worksheets and workbook pages designed to reinforce the lesson. After a complete review of the alphabet letter names and sounds along with blending practice and learning a list of about 50 sight words, children were introduced to their first primer reader. The basal primers contained controlled vocabulary designed to present only a limited number of high frequency sight words, along with other words that fit a particular letter sequence or pattern.

Each day these teachers conscientiously read books aloud to their students as a part of the reading instructional period. Both teachers used one or more centers in their classrooms. Some examples included a skill center focused on reading skills using skill sheets and other worksheet-like activities. The teachers also used a writing center where children copied or traced alphabet letters and other dictation on assigned ditto sheets for handwriting practice. In the reading nook or book center, children sat and read books after finishing other assigned seat work. the teachers

were well prepared and organized, and the children appeared to enjoy both the lessons and the centers.

Reading lessons followed closely the structure and sequence of the directed reading lesson (Betts, 1946). Periodically towards the end of the year, children were encouraged to read silently books of their own choice. Both teachers encouraged our-of-school reading with various extrinsic reward programs such as Book It from Pizza Hut. Bulletin boards and room decor reflected carefully controlled teacher selection and quality. many items in the classroom decor were either teacher made or commercially produced. The completion of the basal readers, mastery of the scope and sequence of skills, and passing end-of-year reading skill tests seemed to reflect both the immediate and long-term goals of instruction, although both teachers indicated that the end goal of their instruction was teaching children to read well. Language, spelling and handwriting were taught at other times of the day as separate subjects. The total time devoted to reading and language instruction in the basal classrooms was approximately 120 to 150 daily.

The whole language teachers and classrooms were rich in print and print-oriented activities. The holistic teachers followed a daily reading routine, as outlined and described by Holdaway (1981). This reading routine was divided into five subroutines: (a) tune in, (b) old favorites, (c) learning about language, (d) new

story, and (e) independent activities. The teachers used Big Books or the Shared Book Experience (Holdaway, 1979) to provide guided reading instruction in the whole language classrooms. Also, read-along books and tapes, music, and art activities accompanied the Big-Book units. Various facets and uses of the language experience approach-experience charts, word banks, and pattern sentence stories were used to enrich the print practices in the classroom. Children were encouraged to write and to use invented spellings on a regular basis.

The students also used several centers within the classrooms. A book center was used for the children as an integral part of the daily reading period. These books could be read independently or with the support of older students or read-along tapes. The writing center was designed for children to work independently or collaboratively on self-selected writing projects. A publishing, conferencing, and editing center was adjacent to the writing center for students to obtain needed assistance. Another activity center in reading encouraged children to read Big Books, words from the classroom word bank, and together with another student, songs and poems copied onto large chart paper.

The typical daily routine for these teachers began with 10 to 15 minutes of "tune in" or group readings of enlarged text of new or previously in rehearsed poems or songs and logo language. In the next 10 to 15 minutes block of time, students

re-read old favorites or previously introduced songs, or Big Books. Learning about language was a 15 minute time period when students, as a group, demonstrated or practiced reading and writing strategy lessons during the reading of enlarged text. About 20 minutes per day was spent on reading or rereading a new story that was recently introduced and discussing or responding to it. A 60 minute block of time also was devoted to independent activities. In the reading/language instructional block, children rotated through various centers as previously described. To conclude the daily language/reading period, the students spent about 10 minutes sharing writing projects in an author's chair; performing a group project like a play, a puppet show, or a reader's theater; or presenting a co-authored Big Book, etc. Out-of-school reading also was encouraged in these classrooms, with reward and record-keeping approaches similar to those in the basal classrooms. The traditional subjects of spelling, handwriting, and language were integrated into the daily reading routine. Each day, 120 minutes were scheduled for language and reading instruction in these classrooms.

All four classes used a supplemental phonics programs in addition to the reading programs called Alpha One: Breaking the Code. In Alpha One, the letters of the alphabet are introduced as personalities with a special and unforgettable characteristic from which they get their sound. For example, Mr. M has a Munching

Mouth. Mr. N has a Noisy Nose; Mr. F has Funny Feet. The letter people put their sounds together and make words. There are no dull rules to remember in Alpha One.

A half hour block of time was set aside each day for this phonics program. This programs included large pictures of the letter people, records, tapes with songs, activity books and large blow-up dolls to represent each letter person. Approximately three days were spend as a review of each letter person. All of the short vowel were taught in sequence followed by consonants and then the long vowels.

The purpose of this phonics program was to teach beginning readers that printed letters and letter- combinations represent speech sounds heard in words. In applying phonic skills to an unknown word, the reader blends a series of sound dictated by the order in which particular letters occur in the printed word.

The Alpha One program was only one of may basic phonic program used to assist in teaching reading in these four classrooms. The Alpha One focused on teaching letters sounds, digraph, diphthongs and graphemes.

The California Basic Skills Test (CTBS) was administered to the four first grade classes at the end of the school year in late April. The test consisted of sections of

reading comprehension, vocabulary, spelling and word analysis. Each child was administered this test. The test results were gathered on each child from the four classes. The 95 test score sheets were divided into two groups. Group 1 consisted of the children from the whole language classroom. Group 2 consisted of the children from the basal reading classroom. Using the test records, information was gathered on each of the children on tests of reading comprehension, vocabulary, spelling and word analysis and the national percentile rank of the California Test of Basic Skills given in April 1995-1996 school year.

RESULTS: ANALYSIS AND DATA

As can be seen in Table 1, there was a minor difference between Whole

TABLE 1

Mean, Standard Deviation and the *t* of the Samples for the Vocabulary Subtest

Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	*t*	Significance
Whole Language	17.5	6.17	1.29	NS
Basal	19.27	7.03	—	—

Language groups and the Basal group. The difference between means was approximately 1.8. However, statistically there was no significant difference in Vocabulary achievement.

Table 2 shows Comprehension results of the samples.

TABLE 2

Mean, Standard Deviation and the *t* Value for the Comprehension Subtest

Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	*t*	Significance
Whole Language	19.1	7.24	2.6	S < .01
Basal	23.1	7.58	——	——

The difference between means was 4.0. The *t* value was 2.60 which shows a significant difference of scores from the Comprehension subtest.

As shown in Table 3 of the Word Analysis subtest results, there was no

TABLE 3

Mean, Standard Deviation and the *t* of the Samples for the Word Analysis Subtest

Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	*t*	Significance
Whole Language	19.63	4.90	1.9	NS
Basal	21.81	6.13	____	____

significant difference. This was approaching a significant difference because it is found to be significant at the .06 level. The difference between means was 2.18.

Table 4 shows no significant difference between scores on the Spelling

TABLE 4

Mean, Standard Deviation and the *t* Value for the Spelling Subtest

Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	*t*	Significance
Whole Language	12.17	5.81	0.74	NS
Basal	13.52	11	____	____

subtest. The difference between mean scores was 1.35 with a *t* value of .74.

Table 5 represents the class average means for the whole language class and

TABLE 5

Class Average Means on the California Test of Basic Skills

Comparison Groups

	Whole Language	Basal Approach
Scores	M	M
Word Analysis	65.25	72.1
Spelling	44	42.9
Comprehension	50.15	61.05
Vocabulary	54.55	60.15

the basal class on the California Test of Basic Skills.

CONCLUSION

The results indicate a statistically significant difference between whole language strategies and routines and the traditional basal approach, as measured by a standardized reading achievement test at the conclusion of first grade in the area of comprehension.

The traditional basal approach, as measured in this study, exhibited a strength in the three area of word analysis, vocabulary, and spelling.

Over all the classes in which the traditional basal approach was used for instruction averaged higher scores on the standardized test in word analysis, comprehension and vocabulary. The whole language group averaged higher test scores in spelling.

Given the fact that standarized reading tests tend to mirror traditional reading curricular contructs more closely than those taught in whole language classrooms, the conclusion may not be completely reliable.

Many more evaluation studies of whole language programs and basal programs need to be conducted on a larger scale and for longer periods of time. Nonetheless, this study begins to fill the current research regarding comparative studies of whole language and traditional basal reading approaches.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Many more evaluation studies of Whole Language and basal reading programs need to be conducted on a larger scale and for longer periods of time. However, this study adds to the current research regarding comparative studies of whole language and traditional basal reading approaches.

The type of reading instruction whether basal or whole language, while important, does not in and of itself guarantee increased academic achievement, simply changing reading instruction from basal approach to whole language will not improve academic achievement. Reliance on whole language without phonics instruction will hinder reading achievement.

Teachers and administrators need to work together so that instructional programs are understood as being more than a particular set of materials. Basals may then become what they were designed to be, useful tools for helping teachers carry out effective reading instruction. It is important not to become blinded by the issue of whole language versus basal.

Instead focus should be placed on effectively training teachers to guide, encourage, and challenge student's ideas, through a variety of materials which encourage children to become active and interested learners.

One limitation of this study was the California Test of Basic Skills. The test is not a perfect measure of what individual students can or cannot do. Paper tests cannot measure everything that students learn. A child's scores on a particular test can vary from day to day and many factors can affect a particular score whether the

child guesses, receives clear direction, follow the directions carefully, is comfortable, and so forth.

Additional research needs to be conducted to examine the effects of instructional method on not only comprehension achievement, but also attitudes and self-concept. A longitudinal study should be conducted to compare reading achievement of students taught using the basal versus the whole language approach. Students should be examined not only in the lowest elementary grades, but also in the middle and high school grades.

Educators need to continue the search for measures to assess reading progress in classrooms designed around the whole language classrooms as well as the traditional classrooms.

BASALS, WHOLE LANGUAGE AND PHONICS

RELATED RESEARCH

The debate as to whether teachers should use phonics when teaching reading was resurrected in 1955 when Rudlf Flesch wrote, Why Johnny Can't Read. He claimed that there was no such thing as remedial reading prior to 1925, because phonics was being used to teach students. However, after 1925, the United States moved to the "whole worlds" method. American children were exposed to the Elson readers. European countries continued to use phonics but American children learned words through the use of the rote method, by repeating them over and over again in sentences. Instruction in phonics stopped, leading to reading problems in this country (Flesh, 1955).

Reading has long been considered one of the most important skills that a child needs to learn. The ability to read is a basic skill which enables a child to learn information on his/her own and enjoy literature. For these reasons schools wish to employ the best methods of reading instruction available (DeWalt, 1988).

The preferable method for reading instruction, especially the basal approach and decoding emphasis versus alternate methods, such as whole language continues to generate controversy (Bracey, 1992).

There appears to be a growing controversy concerning the efficacy of different approaches to the teaching of reading, especially between the basal and whole language approaches. Proponents of the basal approach state that this approach offers a carefully and effectively sequenced program where prerequisite subskills are mastered before subsequent subskills are introduced.

Flesch indicates that phonics is the only "natural system of learning how to read" (Flesch, 1955). It is the way people all over the world learned how to read since the development of the alphabet after 1500 B.C. People learned the reading process by memorizing letters and sounds with much ease. After 1952, teaching reading word by word became tedious, boring and primitive. It was similar to a time when people had to remember pictures and symbols for words (Flesch, 1955).

Following Flesch's book, Chall (1967) studied the effectiveness of "code-emphasis" (phonics) and "meaning-emphasis" (whole word) methods. Chall discovered that children taught by phonic methods showed greater achievement in word recognition as well as reading comprehension.

In the twenty-five years since the publication of Flesch's book some school systems became "phonics first" systems, the others remained "look say" systems. Children who learn "phonic first" can read more words at the end of first grade than

"look and say" learners. Children rely too much on pictures and context clues with the latter methods. They don't learn the true mechanics of learning to read. It is often a guessing game, according to Flesch (1981).

It is extremely important and critical for students to know how to decode words consistently, and not by speculation, if they are to be successful readers. The teaching of phonics absolutely offers the children necessary help in the learning of reading. The basal readers of the 70's and 80's included more phonics instruction, which explained improvements in reading performances (Groff and Seymour, 1987).

Systematic phonics is definitely not enough. There has been a relationship between reading and meaning. Phonics, in context, is a helpful tool to achieve effectiveness (Fox, 1986). The curriculum should be rich in oral language and literature. However, phonetic strategies for decoding and comprehension are essential for a complete program (Pils, 1991).

The preferable method for reading instruction, especially the basal approach and decoding emphasis versus alternate methods, such as whole language continues to generate controversy (Bracey 1992; Chall 1989). Previous research has found that teachers believed the basal reader approach guaranteed a sequenced program of

skill mastery. Whole language proponents state that this approach is preferable because it integrates all language components into the teaching of reading and therefore improves comprehension (Holland and Hall, 1989).

In 1977, ninety-five percent of primary teachers in the United States and eighty percent of intermediate grade teachers relied on a basal reader for instruction (Spache, , 1986). Flood and Lapp (1986) reported that over 90% of teachers in the United States used the basal method. However, in more recent years, the whole language philosophy of learning has become popular in many primary classrooms. (Flood and Lapp (1986).

The review of literature includes discussion of whole language instruction, the basal approach, and the effects of instructional method on comprehension (i.e. achievement) and attitudes towards reading (Bracey, 1992).

Phonetic decoding skills which are necessary for fluent reading are learned through reading experience (Smith, 1988). When children can relate experience to reading, reading becomes more personal (Pickering, 1989).

Proponents of the whole language approach question the effectiveness of the basal approach. Basal readers, commercially designed reading programs dominated reading instruction in the United States. The basal reader evolved when reading was

defined as breaking reading skills into separate components or subskills and teaching those subskills in a prescribed manner (Goodman, 1986).

Wood (1984) reported that more negative effects than positive results were found to support current methods of teaching reading subskills. Wood also stated that no research to date has provided sound empirical evidence to validate either the specific skills advocated or the sequence of their instruction in modern basal programs.

It appeared that no two basals present skills in the same sequence. This suggested that no particular skills sequence is necessary for learning to read (Holland, 1989), yet Estes (1977) has found that students are tested on reading assessment and placed in specific levels according to specific skills mastered rather than on their reading ability.

In a study conducted by Shapiro (1988), of whole language classroom and basal reader vocabulary, it was found that the comparison of vocabulary generated by the students with that of the basal readers indicated that high frequency vocabulary was nearly identical. Low frequency words used by the students were judged to be more current than those of the basal readers. Misspellings demonstrated an over generalization of phonic principles. It was concluded that whole language

instruction does not limit children's exposure to systematic repetition of important vocabulary (Shapiro, 1988).

In a study conducted by Holland (1989), she presented a comparative analysis of the effects of basal and whole language approaches on the reading achievement of first grade students. An analysis of variance conducted on the reading scores clearly indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in reading achievement between classics taught with a basal approach or with a whole language approach.

Previous research has found that teachers believed the basal reader approach guaranteed a sequenced program of skill master. Whole language proponents state that this approach is preferable because it integrates all language components into the teaching of reading improving comprehension (Holland and Hall, 1989).

A study conducted by DeWalt and Winkler (1988), investigated the relationship between type of reading instruction, whole language or basal, and reading comprehension as measured by the California Achievement Test. Results indicated that the dependent variable was not significantly related to method of reading instruction, nor was there an interaction effect between reading method and IQ in predicting the CAT comprehension scale score.

During the past three decades, research in reading has been prodigious, and much has been learned about skilled reading and developmental reading. Certain findings have emerged from research that have direct implications for reading instruction and that bear on important issues in the long standing controversy between those who advocate code-oriented approaches to initial instruction and those who advocate meaning- oriented approaches, whole language (Payne, 1992).

Research findings tend to favor the major theoretical premises on which code emphasis approaches to reading instruction are based and are at variance with the major theoretical premises on which whole language approaches are based. However, the findings do not preclude the compatibility of certain features of both approaches (Vellutino 1991).

Milligan conducted a study in 1988 that studied the effects of whole language instruction and to assess the effectiveness on the comprehending ability of first grade children. Instruction provided the subjects in the experimental classrooms was based on whole language principles. The subjects in the control classrooms were provided instruction based mainly on the scope and sequence of the adopted basal series. All of the subjects were administered individually a Cloze Deletion Test (CDT) designed to measure comprehending ability. The mean score attained by the

experimental and control subjects were compared as intact groups by three levels of ability. There was no significant difference in the mean score attained by the experimental and control subjects as group on the Cloze Deletion Test. Neither was there a significant difference in the mean score attained by the experimental and control subjects on the Cloze deletion Test as a group or at any of the three ability levels.

Griffith (1992) studied the effect of phonemic awareness on the literacy development of first grade children in a traditional or a whole language classroom. Phonemic awareness is the meta linguistic ability which allows children to reflect on features of spoken language. Correlational studies have identified phonemic awareness as a very powerful predictor of reading achievement in first grade (Juel, 1988).

An understanding of the structure of spoken language and of the relationship between that structure and letters is critical both to early reading success and to later reading achievement, because results in the child's ability to independently decode words not previously taught through direct instruction. (Juel, 1988).

Recent changes in reading instruction have included a movement away from a more traditional skill-based instructional approach to what has been termed whole

language instruction. Typically studies have focused in its effectiveness for developing readiness skills in kindergarten (Brown, 1986) and on vocabulary and comprehension achievement at the first grade level (Reutzel, 1990).

Traditional basal skills instruction uses a part-to-whole methodology. Children are provided direct instruction in individual letter-sound correspondences. It is felt that through direct instruction on individual letter-sound correspondences children will learn to both decode and spell words (Reutzel, 1990).

Griffith (1992) looked at the impact of different kinds of classroom instruction on the achievement of children with various levels of incoming phonemic awareness. the study examined the acquisition of decoding and spelling skills of children with various levels of beginning-of-the-year phonemic awareness. The whole language curriculum included the shared-book experience and the traditional basal curriculum included explicit phonics instruction. High phonemic awareness children outperformed the low phonemic awareness children on all of the literacy measures (Juel, 1988).

At the heart of the debate between code and meaning advocates is the question of whether fluency in identifying words out of context is a prerequisite for effective and efficient comprehension of what is read. on one side of the debate are the whole

language theorists (Goodman, 1985; Smith, 1971) who have long held that reading is a context driven process and that skilled readers use semantic and syntactic constraints in full measure to generate predictions as to the words that are likely to appear in given contexts. As a consequence, readers merely "sample" words from the text, and those words that are processed are recognized by selective sampling of the features defining their letters. This process is said to be aided by the skilled reader's implicit knowledge of redundancy (Goodman, 1985).

Code-oriented theorists have taken an alternate position, contending that skilled reading in word identification is not a contextual process. Research findings are contrary to the position taken by whole language theorists and favor the position taken by code-oriented theorists. there is abundant evidence that language comprehension processes become full operative in reading only when a certain amount of fluency in word identification has been found to be deficient when word identification is slow and cumbersome. the whole language theorists seem to have greatly overestimated the role of context in reading and to have underestimated the role of fluent word identification (Vellutino, 1991).

Adams (1990) reviewed the relevant literature bearing on the code-meaning issue, including the major classroom observation studies comparing whole language type instruction programs, and reported that the evidence favors instruction that

facilitates phonemic awareness and alphabet coding. Code-oriented instruction should not and does not need to exclude the use of meaning oriented activities.

Stahl and miller (1989) in a recent meta-analysis comparing whole language and more traditional basal (code-oriented) programs, found that effect sizes favored the whole language programs at the kindergarten level, effect sizes favored the basal program at the first grade level. Stahl and Miller concluded that whole language/ language experience approaches might be most effective for teaching functional aspects of reading such as print concepts and expectations about reading. a more direct approach might be better at helping students master word recognition skills prerequisite to effective comprehension.

DeWalt (1988), states that the main issue most likely will be that teachers and administrators need to work together so that instructional programs are understood as being more than a particular set of materials. Basals may then become what they were designed to be, useful tools for helping teachers carry out effective reading instruction. It is important not to become blinded by the issue of whole language versus basal. Instead focus should be placed on effectively training teachers to guide, encourage, and challenge students' ideas, through use of a variety of

materials which encourage children to become active and interested learners (DeWalt, 1988).

The implications of the research for teaching children to read should be apparent. the most basic idea seems to be that identification is vitally important to success in reading. Instruction that facilitates both phoneme awareness and alphabetic coding is vitally important to success of reading. However, the use of whole language activities are vitally important in teaching reading, such as the use of context for monitoring and predictive purposes, vocabulary enrichment to support printed words with meaning, discussion that would encourage reading for comprehension, integration or reading, writing and spelling. The research supports a balanced approach between whole language and core-oriented approaches to reading instruction.

The type of reading instruction whether basal or whole language, while important does not in and of itself guarantee increased academic achievement. Simply changing reading instruction for basal approach to whole language will not improve academic achievement and as Chall (1989) has stated, reliance on whole language without phonics instruction will hinder reading achievement.

Some educators believe that within the next decade whole language programs will replace basal readers. The argument being that basal readers and whole language programs are incompatible and cannot coexist. However, research does not support the idea that the preferred method for teaching reading is exclusively the phonics approach or the whole language approach. Rather, the teaching of reading should be a balanced approach which integrates both instructional methods (Bracey, 1992).

Although certain aspects of basal readers are incompatible with the whole language philosophy, there are certain issue on which they coincide. For example, both approaches include excellent stories, written by the nation's best children's authors (Farr, 1988). Most basal readers encourage teachers to choose from the activities included rather than using all of them. In addition, writing activities and a wide range of creative applications are now standard in most basals. Basal readers are constantly changing and will continue to do so (Bracey, 1992).

The review of the related research included studies and discussions of whole language instruction, the basal reading approach, phonemic awareness, and the effects of instructional method on comprehension and attitudes towards reading.

Kenneth Goodman's research in 1964, is critical of language instruction based

hierarchies of skills, and argues that children learn language in a complex integrative, interactive way by using meaningful literature, contextual and syntactical cues.

Connie Bridge and associates (1983) showed that kindergarten children and low-achieving first grades learned more sight words using predictable storybooks than using skill-based reading readiness basals. Another study of children's storybooks was also conducted in 1983 by Elley and Mangubhai. They studied 380 children using storybooks rather than skill-oriented basals. Standardized test results in reading, listening and comprehension progressed at twice the normal rate.

Maries Carbo's reading style research (1987) concluded that only a small percentage of children really need phonics instruction to become good readers.

Doake's research (1980) comparing basal reading approaches to shared reading approaches showed that children in shared reading had more advanced growth in comprehension and vocabulary that children taught with basals.

Another study was done comparing basal and language experience. Stauffer's research (1965) in language experience compared the language experience approach to the basal approach. The study showed that children from the language experience approach earned higher scores in paragraph meaning, spelling, reading and writing than children taught with the basal.

In 1974 Lutz conducted a study in the U.S. of the deficiencies of the basal text. He researcher 25 basal texts and found that basal texts in primary grades indicated that sentences were simple, monotonous and sterile. A more recent study conducted by Bruno, Bettelheim and K. Zelan found deficiencies in the basal text (1982). They studied the reading materials in the U.S. and concluded that basal texts lacked real literature, were contrived and were often uninteresting.

Research on basal text versus whole language has been plentiful but the results from study to study can be conflicting and contradictory. This is a time when great pressure is places on teachers and administrator for having high standardized test scores. It appears through these studies that the language approach is more effective than basal programs when measured by the reading achievement scores. many more evaluation studies of whole language programs need to be conducted on a larger scale and for extended periods of time to see the long range effects.

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Appendix A

Scores for the Vocabulary Subtest of the California Test of Basic Skills

Whole Language Group

Student	Score	Student	Score
1	18	24	13
2	14	25	19
3	17	26	20
4	19	27	15
5	10	28	18
6	11	29	26
7	17	30	13
8	4	31	20
9	13	32	10
10	29	33	17
11	13	34	12
12	18	35	23
13	19	36	4
14	14	37	27
15	30	38	20
16	22	39	23
17	22	40	13
18	17	41	17
19	23	42	28
20	16	43	20
21	26	44	18
22	12	45	5
23	24	46	17

Basal Instruction Group

Student	Score	Student	Score
1	17	25	23
2	11	26	8
3	23	27	24
4	14	28	22
5	15	29	17
6	21	30	21
7	27	31	8
8	11	32	25
9	23	33	22
10	10	34	23
11	9	35	25
12	12	36	19
13	27	37	20
14	23	38	7
15	16	39	17
16	18	40	27
17	14	41	29
18	29	42	30
19	13	43	27
20	28	44	27
21	8	45	22
22	9	46	24
23	27	47	29
24	15	48	9

TOTAL QUESTIONS = 32

Appendix B

Scores for the Comprehension Subtest of the California Test of Basic Skills

Whole Language Group

Student	Score	Student	Score
1	13	24	11
2	14	25	11
3	22	26	18
4	31	27	16
5	17	28	24
6	16	29	30
7	19	30	17
8	14	31	20
9	15	32	9
10	35	33	23
11	13	34	14
12	23	35	23
13	19	36	5
14	13	37	28
15	27	38	12
16	15	39	13
17	29	40	27
18	13	41	22
19	29	42	28
20	11	43	19
21	34	44	20
22	11	45	10
23	25	46	21

Basal Instruction Group

Student	Score	Student	Score
1	29	25	25
2	21	26	18
3	33	27	25
4	22	28	13
5	22	29	29
6	29	30	30
7	36	31	12
8	17	32	16
9	29	33	31
10	15	34	14
11	9	35	27
12	22	36	25
13	30	37	25
14	28	38	8
15	23	39	22
16	28	40	28
17	14	41	32
18	32	42	26
19	21	43	29
20	30	44	32
21	10	45	23
22	10	46	23
23	30	47	35
24	19	48	9

Appendix C

Scores for the Word Analysis Subtest of the California Test of Basic Skills

Whole Language Group

Student	Score	Student	Score
1	23	24	17
2	15	25	18
3	23	26	21
4	24	27	19
5	17	28	21
6	20	29	24
7	23	30	17
8	9	31	19
9	18	32	10
10	27	33	20
11	13	34	13
12	17	35	22
13	22	36	12
14	19	37	23
15	28	38	22
16	23	39	15
17	24	40	17
18	23	41	23
19	26	42	27
20	14	43	18
21	25	44	21
22	20	45	7
23	26	46	18

Basal Instruction Group

Student	Score	Student	Score
1	30	25	20
2	16	26	8
3	27	27	23
4	24	28	22
5	21	29	22
6	25	30	25
7	29	31	13
8	15	32	23
9	30	33	27
10	13	34	23
11	21	35	25
12	20	36	25
13	30	37	23
14	25	38	11
15	23	39	22
16	22	40	25
17	18	41	29
18	27	42	27
19	21	43	27
20	27	44	28
21	20	45	23
22	13	46	24
23	8	47	28
24	10	48	9

TOTAL QUESTIONS= 30

Appendix D

Scores for the Spelling Subtest of the California Test of Basic Skills

Whole Language Group

Student	Score	Student	Score
1	18	24	3
2	6	25	7
3	18	26	11
4	20	27	8
5	11	28	10
6	14	29	14
7	14	30	6
8	5	31	12
9	11	32	0
10	25	33	9
11	5	34	8
12	17	35	12
13	18	36	4
14	19	37	14
15	24	38	13
16	17	39	9
17	21	40	10
18	9	41	8
19	20	42	20
20	4	43	10
21	17	44	15
22	15	45	7
23	12	46	10

Basal Instruction Group

Student	Score	Student	Score
1	25	25	14
2	7	26	6
3	13	27	14
4	11	28	10
5	6	29	15
6	11	30	16
7	23	31	8
8	10	32	8
9	11	33	15
10	7	34	14
11	8	35	15
12	5	36	12
13	25	37	9
14	15	38	8
15	12	39	14
16	8	40	14
17	10	41	19
18	18	42	17
19	4	43	13
20	20	44	10
21	10	45	14
22	12	46	11
23	8	47	13
24	6	48	3

TOTAL QUESTIONS= 28